

3/17/2021

Dear ISSD #109 Parents/Guardians & Staff:

Re: Revised Return-to-School (RtS) Plan - 2020-2021

At our last Meeting of the Board of Education on 3/16/2021, the Board approved our revised COVID-19 RtS Plan to finish out the remainder of the current school year. Please see the following for the details:

As you may have heard and/or seen in print or through the media outlets, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) recently came out with joint revised guidance on how schools should work further to return students to their schools and classrooms. This revised guidance was issued on March 9th.

The highlights of the revised guidance from ISBE/IDPH is primarily as follows:

Face coverings are required at all times, unless while eating;
Social distancing as much as possible;
Contact-tracing is still required, along with appropriate quarantine when advised by the IDPH and the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH);
Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities; and
Handwashing.

With regard to social distancing for in-person instruction, the guidance lowers the bar as to the amount of space required for in-person instruction, as indicated per the following:

Student-to-student interaction: 3-6 feet;
Student-to-vaccinated staff interaction: 3-6 feet;
Unvaccinated staff-to-anyone: 6 feet;
While eating without masks: 6 feet; and
Masked individuals while serving, receiving, or disposing of food: 3-6 feet.

Given this revised guidance, we, as a School District, have an obligation to our students and community members to accommodate for additional in-person learning in the safest manner possible. Having said this, the intent is to inform you, well in advance, of District #109's proposed plans for moving forward.

Nothing will change from our current hybrid plan through our upcoming Spring Break (3/29 - 4/5/2021) and all the way through the first week back from Spring Break (4/6 - 9/2021). Track B is scheduled to be on-site the week of 4/6 - 9/2021.

As of 4/12/2021, all grades K-2 students in Tracks A & B will combine and report to on-site learning with three feet of distancing as much as possible (while eating - six feet) all school days of each week for the remainder of the school year. Grades 3-8 students will continue following our current hybrid plan.

As of 4/26/2021, all grades 3-6 students (in addition to K-2) in Tracks A & B will combine and report to on-site learning with three feet of distancing as much as possible (while eating - six feet) all school days of each week for the remainder of the school year. Grades 7-8 students will continue following our current hybrid plan.

As of 5/3/2021, all grades 7-8 (in addition to K-6) in Tracks A & B will combine and report to on-site learning with three feet of distancing as much as possible (while eating - six feet) all school days of each week for the remainder of the school year.

The school day hours for students will remain as we have had them planned: 8:15 am. through 1:45 pm. After-school and evening activities and events will remain suspended until further notice.

Although the guidance has lifted the requirement of having to take temperatures upon school arrival, out of an abundance of care for everyone's health and safety, we will continue performing this routine through the end of this school year. Self-certifications before reporting to school/work will also remain a requirement.

The guidance makes it very clear that schools should not expect to return to pre-pandemic operations any time soon. So, as we head into the new school year in August 2021, certain precautions should be expected to remain in place. What those are in particular is unknown at this time.

Limits for in-person learning and associated activities (including classrooms, gymnasiums, cafeterias, and multi-purpose rooms) should be determined by the space's ability to accommodate social distancing, not any set capacity limit or percentage.

A person who has had lab-confirmed COVID-19 within the past 90 days or is fully vaccinated does not need to quarantine even if he/she is a close-contact.

Although the guidance has altered the parental options for remote learning requirements, for the remainder of this school year, students whose parents have opted for full-remote learning will remain on full-remote learning until/unless the School Principal determines that the school/classroom has space to accommodate those who wish to change.

Although the plan since January 2021 has been to finish out this school year under the guidelines of our current hybrid parameters, the revised guidance for schools was the impetus for our change in that thinking. I wish to thank everyone in advance for their cooperation and optimism as we move through the fourth and final quarter of this odd school year.

Thank you for your attention, and welcome to spring!

Respectfully,

Blair S. Nuccio, Ed.D.
Superintendent

BSN - 03/17/2021

PS - Please note that a separate communication pertaining to our Player Early Childhood Center is forthcoming with regard to our Early Childhood and Before and After-school Care Programs. This information will come from the Program Director, Ms. Susan Almendarez.